

## Letter from J.B. McCracken to Juliana Reynolds, August 6, 1863

Camp Parole August 6th/63

Friend

JR.

I got your letter directed to this place and individual and glad was I to hear again from you and the boys spoken of. Their kind regards I accept of and give mine in return. As you said I have witnessed and experienced war in all its various and horrid phases with the exception of the crippling by the leaden and iron missiles of death, and which, if its a natural wish, I pray to be delivered from. And as to writing a journal of what I've seen I'm afraid I'd make but a poor stagger at it. Imagination is to no great extent required, as long as facts are the subject. But it requires a better knack of connecting subjects without getting them too much mixed than your humble servt possesses to make one worth perusal, if not altogether tiresome. Asaph Clarke arrived here last week from Winchester where he has lain since the fight at that place. I said here, the Hospital I mean for he's not recovered from his wound yet, nor won't for some time yet.

You fancy I'm not much in love with that place called Richmond you are about right. I dont like they way they have of treating strangers. They go to no great pains of making themselves hospitable or agreeable, and if one could judge from appearance, we were none too welcome to what we did get. They kept us on an Island the most of the time and a lot of men running round us with guns on their shoulders as if they thought we meant to steel from them. But they US. is doing the same thing here at Parol[e] camp. Do you know how much one gets to eat at Richmond, if you don't I can tell you. As long as we was there we got just half a pound of bread, once ounce of poor meat and a pint of slop called

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by them, bean soup. It was made of a poor quality of beans. (Some called them Locust beans, they were small & very dark looking) and muddy water out of the river James. The river was in a continual flood from the time we went there 'till we come away. The cooks would take a pail and scoop it up half sand & half water and in that delightful condition went in the kettles, but I'm thankful we fared no worse. The rebs said it cost them a dollar and a half per man a day at that to keep us. On our road from Winchester to [Staunton?] 98 miles we had to do our own baking as they issued flour instead of bread rations. It's not near so convenient, but quite as good as the soft bread or hard tack. But I will let the Rebbels alone for a little while and come back to parole camp.

To let you know how the thermometers range occasionally for a week past it has been from 93-8 and 103, 105 & 106 degrees and no shades in camp but what is brought from the woods and they soon wilt and wither. It's most like a bake oven through the heat of the day. But I will close this with my respects and thanks. Write again, I'm ever glad to hear from you. Respectfully Your Friend.

J B McCracken